

THE NUMISMATIC JOURNAL.

IN THE INTEREST OF COIN AND CURIOSITY COLLECTORS.

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THE NUMISMATIC JOURNAL.

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NORTH ADAMS, MASS., OCT. 1877.

The New England Currency.

The necessity of coin as a medium of trade was felt in this country at an early period. The wampum of the Indians was used by the white settlers to some considerable extent. It consisted of strings of white shells, a valueless article in itself, except that it had cost time and labor to make it.

The currency of Massachusetts and other Colonies, at first consisted principally of the coins of England, Spain and Portugal, but these did not suffice the wants of our energetic and persevering forefathers and in May 27th. the General Court of Massachusetts ordered the establishment of a mint and the coining of money, Shillings, Sixpences and threepences; to be stamped N. E. on the face and the respective numbers XII, VI, and III. on the reverse.

The mint building was to be made of wood, sixteen feet square, ten feet high, on the land of John Hull who was also appointed its director. The contractor was allowed one shilling out of every twenty he coined for his trouble and expenses; (Robert Sanderson, his associate sharing with him) and which made him at one time one of the richest men in the Colony.

The extensive clipping of these first issues and also being easily counterfeited, led to the

immediate change to the Pine and Oak tree pattern, which was continued for thirty three or four years; the date 1652 being never changed on the coins. In 1662 a two penny piece was issued similar to the shillings, the only variation being in the date.

Every school boy is familiar with the anecdote related of John Hull, who, when his daughter was married to Lemuel Sewell, the founder of Newbury, Mass., he gave her for dowry the pine-tree shillings which equalled her own weight, the wedding day being selected for the trial. This novel generosity created considerable excitement among the staid colonists and many disputes as to the brides' weight. In some numismatic works \$150,000 has been named as the amount of the dowry. These coins have now become rare, notwithstanding the immense quantities that were in circulation and have reached a value which the jolly old coiner little dreamed of; specimens now being worth from \$2 to \$8 and still keep advancing. The Oak-tree patterns command about the same premium. It was partly due to a shilling of the oak-tree pattern, that the threatened punishment of the Colonies for coining money without the Crowns' authority was averted; as is illustrated by the following anecdote. "Sir Thomas Temple who had returned to England and when in conversation with Charles the II, who expressed his dissatisfaction on account of this coinage, took from his pocket a shilling stamped with the figure of the oak tree, the King asked what tree it was, Sir Thomas replied that of course it was the Royal Oak which preserved his majesty's life; the king laughing called them honest dogs and permitted Sir Thomas to proceed with his represen

tations." In 1675, the time of the contract having expired, it was renewed by the General Court in face of the growing opposition to the coining, manifested in England. The Colonists were very anxious to continue this coinage and requested his Majesty to order such a device as would be acceptable, but in 1685 and 1686 the officers of the London mint and the Lord High Treasurer of England, reported against allowing further minting operations in the Colonies, and the Colonists reluctantly suspended further coinage.

The Revolution brought with it the usual necessities of war and immense quantities of paper money was issued. With the peace came the instant demand for coin and on Oct., the 17th 1786 The Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts ordered the erection of a mint. The works were erected on Boston Neck and Dedham and Joshua Withers was appointed mint master. Immense quantities of copper cents and some half cents were coined dated 1787 and 1788. These coins are all of the same design and bear on the obverse an eagle with a bundle of arrows in the left; a shield on the breast, with the word "one cent" or "half cent" legend, Massachusetts, Reverse an Indian, standing, holding bow and arrow; legend "Commonwealth." These coins are now scarce; the cent brings from 50 cents to \$1.50 and the half-cent from \$1.60 to \$4.00. A good set of Massachusetts colonials will form an ornament to any collection.

A new and important discovery in the field of American numismatics, has just been made by Ed Frossard of Irvington, of a colonial Coin relating to New Netherlands. We can only give a description of the coin taken from the "Numisma," which has devoted some four or more columns of interesting matter, illustrating by historical facts and establishing it as a New York colonial.

This coin in the possession of Capt. Wilson Defendorf of New York, who has had it for

some 20 years and had showed it to several prominent numismatists, who could make nothing out of it, Mr. Frossard describes as follows. "OBVERSE Earl's crown, PETER MINUIT. Reverse Triangular shield with slightly curving border and beaver in the field of rippling waters, NOVUM BELGIUM 1623; border serrated, size 18. In condition this coin can be described as a somewhat weak impress, especially in certain parts of the legends, but not to any extent abraded or circulated.

The meaning of the words Novum Belgium is New Netherlands; the date 1623 commemorative of the establishment of the West India Company and the name Peter Minuit is that of the third Governor of New Netherland. The coin is probably unique.

Coin Sales.

The coin sale of Scott & Co., took place at Messrs Leavitt, Clinton Hall, on the 23d and 24th inst. Among the most important lots sold, we notice the following. A unique variety of the 1793 wreath cent, brought \$77.50; 1799, very poor, \$10.00; 1804, very fine \$22.00; 1808 fine, \$5.00; 1811, \$3.00; 1823, \$5.50; Carolina cent, \$12.00; Queen Ann farthing, 1714, \$5.50

The first sale of Mr. S. K. Harzfeld took place at Bangs & Co., 656 Broadway, on the 25th and 26th inst. No. 65 Gloriam Regni, 5 sous piece brought \$23; No. 66 NEW YORKE in AMERICA only \$5.00; No. 71 the rare French Colonial of Louis XV, 1751, \$16.00; No. 117 Ameri. 1793, \$11.50; No. 520, a very fine Didrachm, \$31.50 No. 525, Sybaris, struck 2500 years ago, \$23.00 No. 542, Panormus, one of the smallest gold coins in the world, \$12.50 etc., etc.

PROFESSOR CHARLES E. ANTHON, the learned and honored president of the New York Numismatic Society, has sold his magnificent collection of autographs, representing an innumerable host of distinguished individuals from every civilized country.

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Gleanings.

"An impression prevails with some that the majority of ancient coins offered in America are counterfeit. This is absurd. The proportion of counterfeit antiques to the genuine is less than that of greenbacks. The only coins counterfeited are the rare and costly gold and silver specimens which do not cross the Sea. Dr. Morris who wrote this article, says, "Our patrons need not be alarmed as to counterfeits and that their chances of handling one is less than that of a thunder stroke."

The first English coin dated was 1547. The practice of dating coins and medals did not come into use until the sixteenth century.

Old Meyer Amshell, founder of the Rothschild family, began business in 1772 as a dealer in old coins.

Joseph J. Mickley of Philadelphia born March 24th, 1799, has been unanimously dubbed "the father of American Numismatics."

After much tribulation, we believe that we have at last succeeded in making this number of the Journal in its general appearance about what was intended to do at the outset. Not being located in the most central part of Uncle Sam's domains, we have experienced many disadvantages, in getting our paraphernalia, incident to the publication of this paper, in working order, and now being fully prepared to carry out the promises made in the first issue of the Journal, we offer this number as a sample, confidently believing our efforts will be substantially appreciated, and our subscription list enlarged.

The following lot of COINS, BOOKS, &c., will be sent post paid on receipt of price.

| | |
|--|---------|
| 1609, Chas. Gonzales, baron of Nevers, | \$ 0 50 |
| 1607, Henry IV, double tournois, good, | 60 |
| 1615, Louis XIII, " " fair, | 35 |
| 1655, Louis XIV, Laird de France, " | 30 |
| 1699, " " bust on both side, rare, | 50 |
| 1763, Poltura, good, | 50 |
| 1657, Utrecht, very fair, | 25 |

| | |
|--|------|
| 1695, Duc Cliviae, fair, | 20 |
| 1702, Holland Lion with pole and hat, fine, | 45 |
| 1702, West Frisia, fine, | 40 |
| 1717, Frisia, poor, | 15 |
| 1739, '45, '86, Utrecht, uncir, bright, ea, | 40 |
| Alexander the Great, Drachm, fine, | 1 25 |
| Aes, double head of Janus, | 60 |
| Lucia Augusta, 1st bronze, | 80 |
| Hadrian, Denarii, | 50 |
| 10 Ancient copper coins, poor, | 1 50 |
| 1792, Washington cent, " | 50 |
| 1792, " " electro, | 60 |
| 1792, " half dollar, bronze proof, | 50 |
| 1694, Carolina Elephant piece, electro. | 60 |
| 1788, Massachusetts Cent, good, | 1 00 |
| 1787, Fugio, | 35 |
| 1787, " restrike from original dies uncirculated, | 75 |
| 1781, No. American Token, fair, | 35 |
| 1788, Vermont Auctori, good, | 1 25 |
| 1767, Louisiana R. F. | 50 |
| 1652, Pine tree Shilling, poor, | 1 00 |
| — Cob Money, Mexico mint, three pieces, each, | 25 |
| 100 Foreign coins, | 3 00 |
| — Copy Jewish Shekel, | 75 |
| 1739 Almanac, | 50 |
| 1740. '41. '48. Almanacs, each, | 40 |
| 1753, '54. '57. '60, do each. | 35 |
| 1792, '96, '99, 1800, '02, do each, | 40 |
| — Thursday Lecture, July 11th, 1749, by Joseph Sewall. D. D. fine condition, pamphlet. | 1 50 |
| — An enquiry into the merit of Assassination, with a view to the character of Cæsar. pamphlet, 100 p. printed 1738 | 1 50 |
| — Letters on Chivalry and Romance, printed in London in, 1762, | 75 |
| — Murray's English Reader, | 35 |
| — Don Quixote, Vol III, printed in 1745, | 1 00 |
| — An interesting assortment of old Almanacs of Nathaniel Ames, Boston, from 50 to 75 cents each. | |

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